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Svetlana's new editors

Svetlana Alliluyeva Stalin, the once-popular author of "Only One Year" and "Twenty Letters to a Friend," is being published again. But now that she is back in the Soviet Union after 17 years in the United States and Britain, her subject matter has changed: Instead of describing the horrors of life in Russia under her late father's rule or her own spiritual growth in a free society, she now writes about the "nightmare" of living in the West.

In letters written from England before her return to the Soviet Union, Mrs. Alliluyeva complained that she was living like a hermit; "I see no one, know nothing." She felt that everyone hated her, especially Russian emigres in England, and that there was "no difference" between the Soviet KGB and the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

The key question in all this is Moscow's reason for wanting her back; conceivably she will be used to help rehabilitate Stalin and his murderous policies as a model for Soviet leaders.

Mrs. Alliluyeva has enjoyed privileges beyond the dreams of most people East or West: in the Soviet Union as a kind of communist princess, in the United States as a celebrity. But whatever life gave her was never good enough, and all that she has kept from it is a collection of grievances. One can pity her—and pity even more her 13-year-old American-born daughter Olga, who had to go back with her. But it is no longer possible to take her seriously.

Her return will make Soviet propagandists happy. Nothing in the world, it seems, can do that for Svetlana Alliluyeva.